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ABSTRACT

Step-by-step guidelines for teaching students the processes involved in conceiving, writing, editing, and binding books are presented in this paper. Following a discussion of the values and aims of such a project, possibilities are noted for making class, small group, or individual books. Guidelines are then provided for helping students become involved in the project, find subjects, plan how to treat their subjects, research their subjects, refine and organize their materials, work in workshop situations to obtain feedback and criticism, and complete the processes of writing a first draft, editing and proofreading, writing a second draft, and making a dummy of the book (for which detailed instructions are included). Suggestions for evaluation follow, after which a three-stage editing checklist is provided to help students edit their papers after reading them aloud to the class, reading them to partners, and checking each other's papers for mechanical errors. Illustrated instructions for binding a book are then presented, divided into preliminary comments, a list of materials needed, and step-by-step instructions for preparing book pages, preparing and sewing book spines, making book covers and covering the books, and putting books together. (GW)

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YOUNG AUTHORS: WRITING FOR REAL

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

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In one way or another, Young Authors projects have always been in the instructional repertory of creative teachers. Whenever students are asked to write something real--a newspaper, magazine, or yearbook--they are real authors, as real as Russell Baker or Alice Childress. However, the essay or paragraph that is written "for class," that is, for reading, correcting, and grading solely by the teacher, is not real.

Authors write because they have something to say, and writing assignments that originate with the teacher rarely provide students with pride of authorship. Given the threat of a low grade or the desire to please the teacher, some students will apply themselves diligently to the task and may even profit from describing their room or comparing two famous rock groups. Certainly such assignments have a place in the curriculum. How an entire class responds to a topic or question can provide the teacher with valuable knowledge about his/her students' thoughts and interests, but he/she will not learn very much about how well they write. Nor will the students learn what every professional writer knows: that one generally

CS004504

writes best when one has something to say to a real audience for a real purpose. When students begin to perceive of themselves as real writers rather than as kids who are made to write, the gains in both learning and writing can be extensive.

Young Authors is neither a slick gimmick to end a rough school day nor a change of pace from the hard work of being a good teacher. Its pedagogical foundations are in the learning theories of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner, and in the studies of learning through writing as set forth by James Britton, Janet Emig, and James Moffett. Careful planning, flexibility, and patience are the foremost qualities in the Young Authors teacher, for the realities of conceiving, composing, and binding a book are indeed challenging. But the excitement, interest, and fulfillment that accompany all stages of the process more than compensate for the efforts expended.

What follows, then, are step-by-step guidelines for teaching students how to conceive of, write, edit, and bind their own books, <u>real</u> books that will be read seriously by other students, parents, and teachers, books that will have a real place in the class or school library.

Our special thanks to Harry T. Hahn, Director of the Learning Strategy Center at Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan, whose work with young authors has provided us older authors with knowledge and direction.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Young Authors is a student-centered, language-oriented unit stressing the processes involved with conceiving, writing, and binding a book.

II. AIMS

A. To experience the creative process of producing a book from beginning (subject-finding, planning, finding materials) to end (editing, layout, final copy).

B. To learn how to interrelate an extensive array of language experiences, including observation, recording, note-taking, reflection, discussion, proofreading, and research.

C. To learn some of the skills related to the craft of bookbinding and possible career-related activities.

III. APPROACHES

A. Class book - All members of the class contribute to the making of a single book. Examples: an anthology of creative writing, a class yearbook, a book of illustrations and captions, a book of recipes and similar "how to" activities. (Recommended for grades 1-3)

B. Small group book - Groups of 3-5 students collaborate in writing about a subject of interest to all of them. This approach lends itself to research projects, plays, stories written as a group, and community projects. (Recommended for grades 4-6)

C. Individual book - Students eventually wish to have their own book of writings. Such a book may be the result of journal writing, travel, or personal interests and hobbies. (Recommended for grades 7-12 or advanced work for lower grades.)

Individual books require a good deal of expertise in editing, layout, and binding and should not be attempted unless the students have had class or small group experience.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Involvement - Just the idea of writing a real book is enough to create enthusiasm among students. If books already made by other students are available, distribute them for examination and invite comments.

B. Subject-finding - Writers write best about subjects that interest them personally. Brainstorming in large or small groups generally results in many ideas of mutual interest to students. Subjects may also be related to study in content areas or to personal experiences. Here are a few of the subjects chosen by young authors in prior projects:

Mystery stories

Ghost stories

Animal stories

Science fiction

Sports, fiction and non-fiction

Fashion

Cars

Motorcycles

Skateboards

Sharks

Mushrooms

Knights and Armor

Electricity

Fishing experiences

Airplanes

Poetry of all kinds

Colonial America

Nations of Europe

Olympics

Rock and folk music

Jokes

Cartoons

Character Stories

U. S. Presidents

Military

Field trips, films, and demonstrations are excellent ways of creating interest and finding subjects.

C. Planning - Once a subject has been chosen, students need to decide how the subject will be treated: fiction? research? poetry? personal experience?

opinion? Who will write what? What areas of research or observation will each student be responsible for?

D. Input - Armed with interest, ideas, and directions, the young authors must find materials for their book. Here is an excellent opportunity to introduce students to learning activities relevant to their special needs.

Examples: Discussion
Reading
Research
Observation
Reflection
Note-taking
Listening
Interviewing
Viewing

Library research and other study skills may be introduced at this point.

E. Refinement - After taking notes or recording experiences, the author needs an occasion for refining and organizing his materials. Young authors should be prepared to report their findings and intentions to the class. The report may be based on questions similar to these:

1. What is the subject of your book?
2. Why did you choose this subject?
3. Where or how did you learn about your subject?
4. What will your book be like? What will each chapter or part be about? What about pictures

and illustrations? Have you decided on a title yet?

Questions such as these will not only get the young author to think about what he/she has done, but also of what he/she has yet to do.

F. The Writing Workshop - The word "workshop" suggests purposeful, realistic activity. Three activities characterizing the workshop:

1. Individual writing and reading situations
2. Reading, editing, and discussing student writing in small groups
3. Individual and small group conferences with the teacher

The act of composing is essentially an individual act, and some effort should be made to provide students with a degree of privacy as they write. Corrals made out of large cardboard boxes (3 sides) have been used successfully in many classrooms. Desks may be arranged to face windows or walls rather than people. Writing requires concentration, and the fewer the distractions, the better. It might even be a good idea to set aside blocks of time for writing.

Most writers require feedback and criticism, and one teacher cannot serve the needs of twenty-five or thirty students. Small groups should be formed to provide occasion for the reading and editing of

student writing. In addition, the teacher should spend most of his/her time conferring with students about writing and other related problems.

Process: Instructions for students

(1) First draft - Write on lined composition paper cut to the same size as that of the proposed book. Keep in mind the size of most drawing paper (9" x 12") and white writing paper (8" x 11"). These papers will be folded in half to produce the book pages. Thus, the 9" x 12" paper will produce a book about 6" x 9" when done. Therefore, the composition paper used for the first draft will be 6" x 9". Draw margins of 1" on all sides of the page. Write on only one side of the paper.

(2) Editing/Proofreading - Young authors should be provided with a checklist to guide them in their editing activities. The sample checklist placed at the end of this unit is designed to cover recurring writing problems. Spot checks should be made to assure that the checklist is being used according to instructions.

(3) Second draft - This draft may also be considered as a final draft, especially where younger or less able students are concerned. If a third

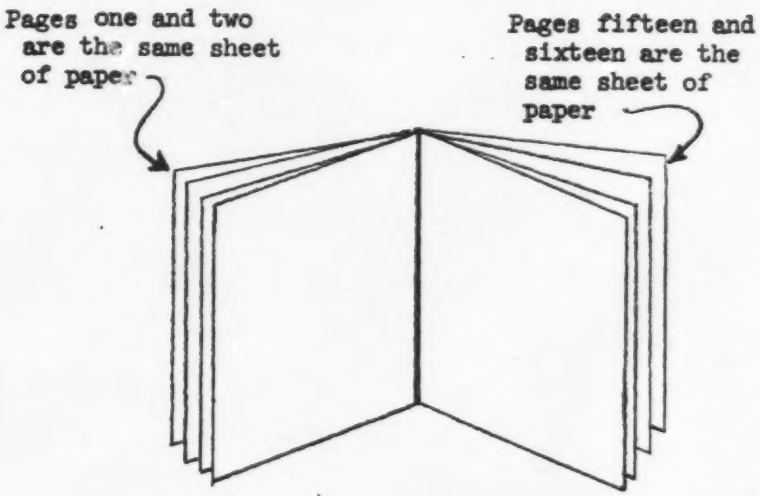
or final draft is anticipated, however, simply have the students rewrite their corrected first draft on lined paper, repeat the editing processes, and proceed to the layout. If the first draft does not require a complete rewriting, make necessary corrections and proceed to the layout.

(4) Layout - A "dummy" or dry run version of the book should be made up to organize copy and illustrations.

(a) Count the number of pages of copy. Add one page for each illustration (unless the picture is very small; then add 1/2 page). Add four pages for the introductory matter (Title page, publishing information, contents, and introduction).

(b) Use newsprint or other inexpensive paper. Fold in half to same size as proposed book.

(c) The number of folded dummy (newsprint) pages should equal the number of pages needed for the book. Be sure to arrange newsprint dummy pages in book fashion: (Thus pp. 1-2 & 15-16 constitute one folded sheet) See the illustration and note which follow.



Note:
Pages one, two, fifteen and sixteen are all on the same folded peice of paper.

(d) Laying out materials

(1) Impress young authors with the importance of an attractive design. Use magazines and books to show how copy and illustrations can be arranged to create a pleasing and some what varied design.

(2) If possible, students should be shown a sample dummy before beginning their own layout.

(3) Variation of design depends on the flexible use of copy and illustrations. Provide scissors so that a page of copy may be cut into halves, thirds, or quarters.

(4) Provide students with staplers and paper clips so that they can attach copy and pictures easily and, if need be, rearrange the layout conveniently.

(5) Be sure that each dummy page is identified by number (introductory pages by roman numeral) so that it duplicates the proposed book in every way.

(e) Final copy. After editing, proofreading, and layout are completed, the book is ready for final copy.

(1) Distribute sheets of white drawing/white writing paper equal in number to the dummy version.

(2) Distribute two pieces of construction paper. When folded these serve as backing sheets and temporary covers.

(3) Using a paper cutter, if necessary, cut drawing and construction sheets to size of the proposed book. Construction paper comes in 9" X 12" sizes.

(4) Using a felt tip black pen, draw straight lines over the lines appearing on a piece of ordinary composition paper. Place this heavily-lined paper under the page to be written on and use as a guide for writing final copy.

(5) Draw margins with the black felt tip pen on this lined guide sheet 1" on all sides.

(6) If illustrations are cut out of magazines, paste on pages with rubber cement. Although drawings may be made directly onto the pages, it is sometimes better to have them done on separate sheets which may then be cut and pasted onto the final pages. This depends upon the level and ability of students.

V. EVALUATION

Process-centered learning activities require that evaluation be based on the following abilities:

A. To follow directions carefully.

B. To work cooperatively with others.

C. To learn how to find and use resources effectively.

D. To organize materials well.

E. To complete tasks on time.

F. To edit and proofread writing with care and attention. From time to time the teacher may wish to test students on their learning of a new skill (note-taking, outlining), but for the most part evaluation comes from grading performance on a day to day basis. The teacher should form the habit of noting the progress students are making by entering positive and negative indications in his/her grade book.

EDITING: THREE POINT CHECKLIST

POINT 1. The whole story, report, or poem. Read your writing aloud to the group from beginning to end. When you have finished, ask the following questions.

	Check One Yes	No
a. Do I have a beginning?	____	____
b. Do you understand everything I have tried to say? (not fuzzy or unclear)	____	____
c. Is everything I have said in the right place? (not mixed-up or confusing)	____	____
d. Did I use enough descriptive words or phrases? (not vague or general)	____	____
e. Do I have an ending?	____	____

If all of your answers are YES, go on to POINT 2.

If you have checked NO to one or more questions consult your group or your teacher, then rewrite.

POINT 2. Read your writing aloud to a partner, <u>one sentence at a time</u>. Ask these questions about each sentence.

	Yes	No
a. Does each sentence make sense?	____	____
b. Is each sentence complete?	____	____
c. Does each sentence sound right as I read it?	____	____
d. Have I avoided writing too many long or too many short sentences?	____	____

If all of your answers are YES, go on to POINT 3.

If you have checked NO to one or more questions consult your group or your teacher, then rewrite.

POINT 3. Exchange papers and check each others for spelling and punctuation. Ask these questions.

	Yes	No
a. Are all of my words spelled correctly?	____	____
b. Have I capitalized the first words in all of my sentences? And proper names?	____	____
c. Have I ended each statement with a period?	____	____
d. Have I ended each question with a question mark?	____	____
e. Are my commas in the right places?	____	____
f. Have I indented my paragraphs?	____	____

When you have finished your checklist, bring it to your teacher.

BINDING A BOOK

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS AND MATERIALS NEEDED:

Consideration of book size is important as a preliminary stage. When folded, 9"x12" paper will produce a book of approximately 9x6 inches. Remember, margins must be left on all book pages. Page numbers, illustrations, or the written content must not extend to the edge of the pages, since these may be cut off when trimmed. Most school books are 9"x6" or 10"x8". If old books are available, use them for their covers. Cut paper or covers to fit your book size. Getting everything you need and planning ahead are important. The materials you will need are:

1. Heavyweight cardboard, old book covers or binder's board, and some type of covering to put on them; e.g., Contact, wallpaper, burlap, pictures, or fabric for a new cover treatment.
2. Mystik tape or buckram at least 2" wide for binding the book spine.
3. White drawing paper (9"x12" or 12"x18") for book pages.
4. Colored construction paper - the same size as the drawing paper.
5. Muslin strips about 2" or 3" wide.
6. Awl, student compass, or other suitable sharp-pointed tool for piercing paper.
7. Large-eyed or tapestry needle, thread, masking tape, scissors, ruler, Elmer's glue, and the use of a paper cutter or a razor utility knife.

PREPARING BOOK PAGES:

Prepare the book pages according to the following steps:

1. After all drafting, writing, and layout have been completed. determine exactly how many pages will be needed. Divide the number of pages by four (4) to get the number of sheets needed.
2. Use 9"x12" or 12"x18" paper and fold so as to make a booklet. Folding each sheet first and then placing one inside the other makes a neater folding job.

   (NOTE: The book writing can be done first and then bound, or the book can be bound first and then the "writing" put on the pages.)
3. The two outer pages, end sheets, are colored construction paper. (Illustration 1.) When finished, one piece of construction paper will be glued to the covers to hide all the book construction.

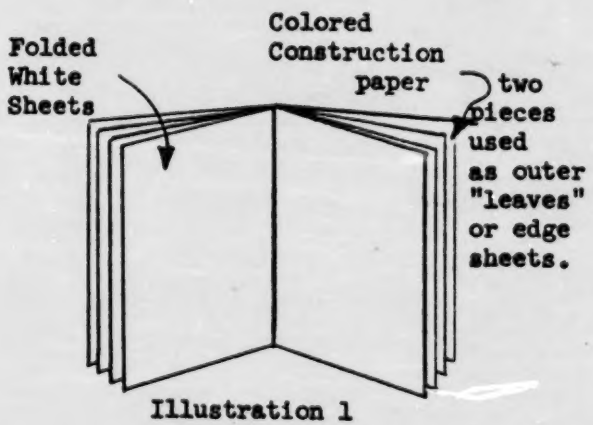


Illustration 1

4. Pages <u>can</u> be trimmed at this time so that they are $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch shorter than the height of the book covers, but equal to the covers in width. (Illustration 2.) <u>Or</u>, cut the covers to fit your paper. If you don't trim expertly, making the pages the same size as the book is satisfactory at this point, but they will have to be trimmed later to the above specifications. The pages should remain the same size as the cover for the width even after trimming. Trimming the pages is <u>best done after sewing</u>. Using a razor utility knife with a ruler as a guide is best for books of many pages--for other books, the paper cutter is satisfactory.

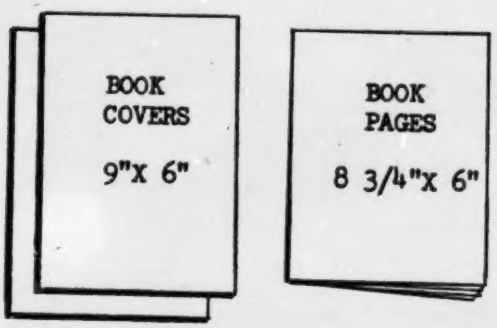


Illustration 2

SEWING:

Sewing should be done according to the following steps:

1. A piece of muslin about 2" to 3" wide and a little shorter than the book should be temporarily taped with masking tape to the construction paper along the spine of the book. (Illustration 3.) The spine is the fold of your book pages.

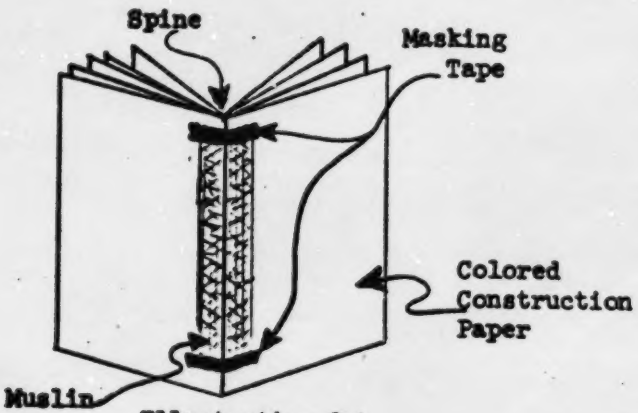


Illustration 3

2. Lay the book open flat with the white pages facing you. Make holes along the fold, making sure to pierce all the pages.
3. An old piece of ceiling tile, old cardboard, old book covers, or old magazines are helpful in acting as a cushion when making the holes.
4. Five holes are to be made. (Illustration 4.) One hole in the center, one hole about an inch from either edge, and an additional hole between the center hole and each end hole.

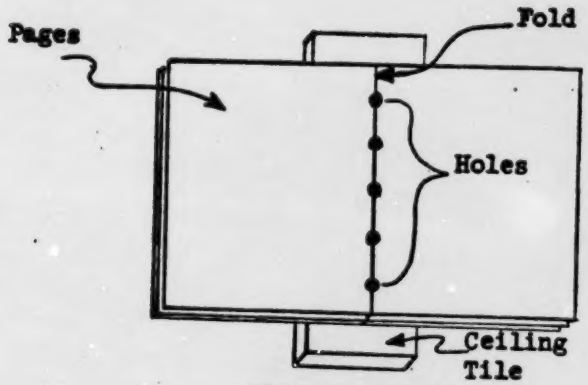


Illustration 4

5. Measure out enough thread to equal about four times the height of the book. Thread the needle, doubling the thread (no knot required), and sew through the holes following the sequence below.
6. Be sure to leave enough of a "tail" for tying when done.
7. Sewing Sequence: Begin at the center hole (from the outside or back) through the muslin. Then thread through holes 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, and return through the center hole to the back. (Illustrations 5 and 6. To help visualize, use Illustration 6 as a guide.

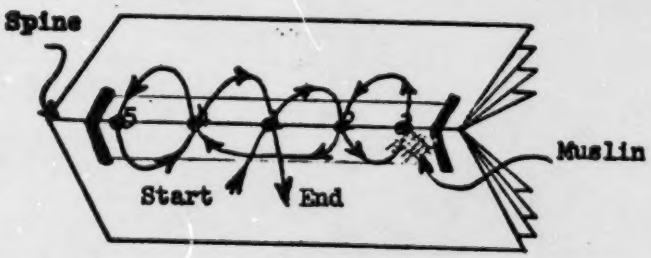


Illustration 5

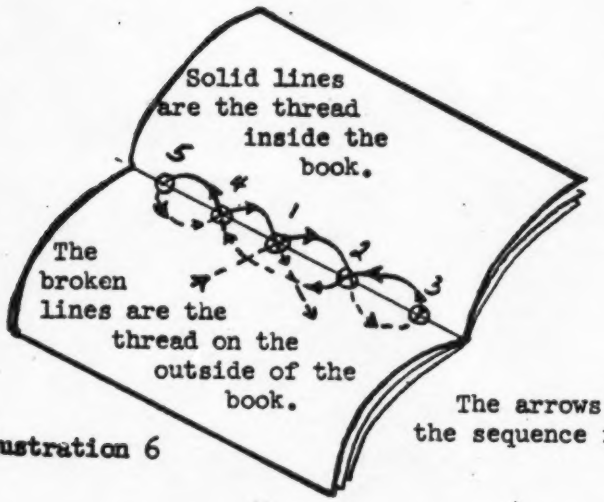

Solid lines are the thread inside the book.
The broken lines are the thread on the outside of the book.
The arrows show the sequence for sewing.

Illustration 6

8. Pull thread taut; tie thread ends and trim excess.

   (NOTE: Now trim the pages top, bottom and opening edge for neatness.)

MAKING THE BOOK COVERS:

Follow the steps below for making the book covers:

1. The book covers are best prepared after the sewing and trimming of the pages have been done. Measure book size. Cut covers 1/4" larger than height, but equal to the width. Refer to Illustration 2.
2. Prepare the covers by finishing (covering) them with Contact, fabric, wallpaper, student drawings, illustrations, rubbings, or other artistic creations which are "glued" to the covers.
3. The covering material should be about one inch larger than the cover on three sides. (See Illustration 7.)

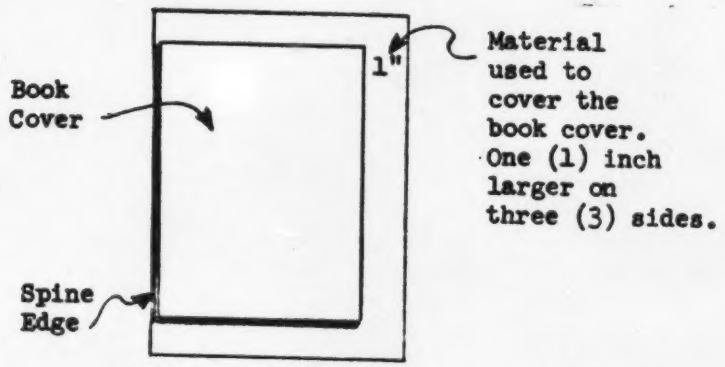


Illustration 7

4. The edge which is part of the spine does not need to be finished as do the other three visible edges.
5. Fold the excess covering over the edges, after mitering the corners, in order to make a neat edge. (Illustration 8.)

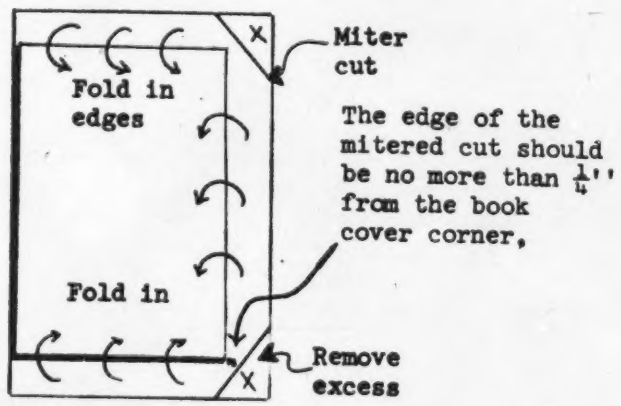


Illustration 8

6. If pictures are used on the cover, clear Contact can be applied over the entire cover and mitered, as above, in order to produce a finished appearance.

7. Mystik tape or buckram 2" or 3" wide is used to bind the spine and thus hold the book covers together. Cut a length of tape about 1" longer than the book.

8. Place book covers on the tape so that about 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch remains between the covers. This is to allow the pages to be fitted into the book and create the spine. If no space is left, the pages will not fit in and the covers will not close. Fold excess tape over into the book. (Illustration 9.) Another variation is the placing of a narrow piece of book cover in the center of the spine to make a flat spine.

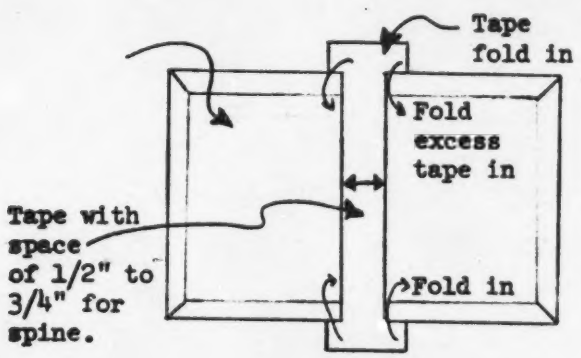


Illustration 9

9. The covers are now ready for the pages to be fitted into place.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

Follow the steps below for putting the book together:

1. Remove the masking tape from the muslin. (Illustration 3.)
2. Place the sewn book into the opened book covers. Only 1/8 of inch of the cover should be showing on three sides. (Illustration 10.)

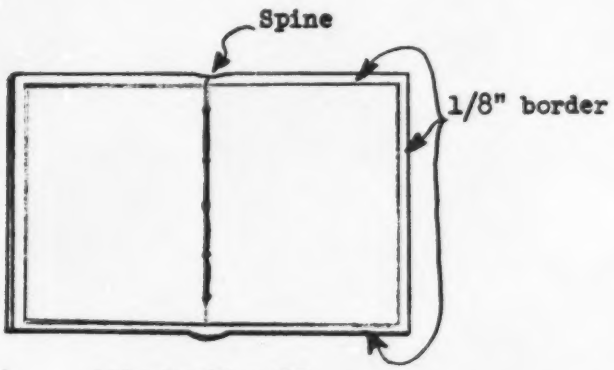


Illustration 10

The pages will protrude into the spine about 1/8 or 3/16 of an inch beyond the covers. (Illustration 11.)

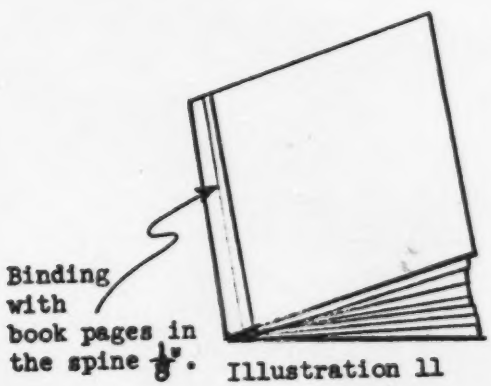


Illustration 11

3. Glue the muslin and the outside sheet of colored construction paper to the covers with the book properly in place with the 1/8" border. (Illustrations 12 and 13.

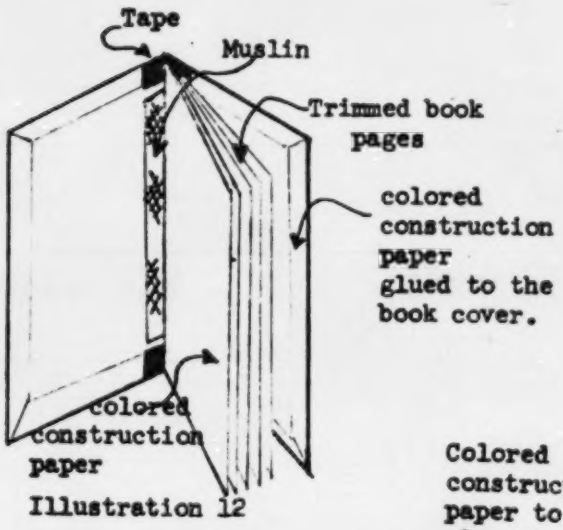


Illustration 12

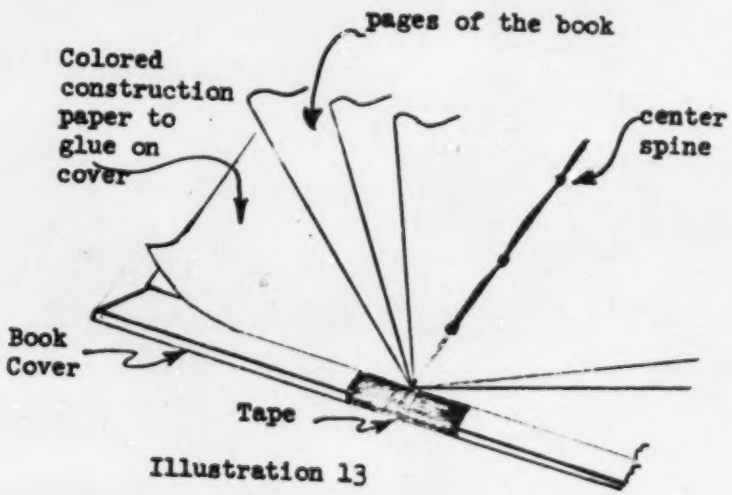


Illustration 13

4. Check for excess glue and wipe. Let dry, under pressure, if possible. Elmer's and other white glues dry quickly and are suitable for all the book gluing needs except for gluing pictures onto the book pages. Rubber cement is best for this process. Your book is done. Alternate methods will depend upon the materials available and your creative inventiveness.